

On-Site Inventory Project

Brightly Colored and Well Worn

By: Intern Clare Tally-Foos

Collection Manager's note: Clare and Seema's 10-week internship ended in mid-March. Together they inventoried thousands of objects, however the project was not quite completed. Clare agreed to continue on for another quarter and has been inventorying with me on Fridays. We have reached nearly 4,600 artifacts inventoried and are just a few shelves away from starting the last row. –Sarah Samson

Our last blog was about a fairly common object: the toaster. Once again, a humble and unlikely collection of objects has captured my imagination: clothing. The first box of clothing I encountered contained dresses. For some reason, those dresses struck me. They are brightly colored, but well worn. There is something about an article of clothing that is over a century old—there are few objects that are as closely tied to our lives than our clothing. To me, this is the fascinating aspect of these clothes – they were present with these individuals for important moments and mundane; Sundays and weekdays. As we worked through the collection of dresses, uniforms, and children's clothes I couldn't help but imagine the lives lived within them.

One object that especially struck me was a wedding dress that had been packed away along with a veil (adorned with dried flowers) and a bouquet. Silk with a gauze overlay, the dress is simply beautiful. It is a lingering physical connection to a wonderful celebration long ago. Many other articles of clothing inspired small flights of fancy for me, but I will not dwell on them here. Suffice to say I really loved working through this segment of the collection. We're up to a little over 4,000 objects inventoried with a ways to go yet. Thus far we've encountered those things we've shared with you and many other interesting objects, too many to write a blog on each. A few other objects—beyond the dresses and toasters—I have enjoyed range from a mess kit that travelled the world with a soldier during World War I, a vacuum cleaner patented in 1914, and some truly beautiful china sets that reminded me of my grandmother.

I look forward to sharing more of my thoughts on this inventory adventure with you and hope you have time to come in sometime to see the things we have on exhibit, if you haven't already!



One of several wedding dresses already inventoried. This particular dress was worn by City Clerk Agnes Edwards at her wedding in 1912. (RHM# 2008.045.001)

Renton History Museum